

Clearwater Focus Watershed

Nez Perce Tribe

**Annual Report
2002 - 2003**



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Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208

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Clearwater Focus Watershed; Nez Perce Tribe (NPT)

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Prepared by:
Ira Jones
Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries/Watershed Program
P.O. Box 365
Lapwai, Idaho 83540

Prepared for:
U.S. Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
Division of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 3621,
Portland, OR 97208-3621

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ABSTRACT

The Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries Resource Management, Watershed Division, approaches watershed restoration with a goal to protect, restore, and enhance a connected network of functioning habitat types capable of supporting all fish life stages. Its goal is also to re-establish normal patterns of production, dispersal, and exchange of genetic information within the 1855 Treaty Area.

The Nez Perce Tribe began watershed restoration projects within the Clearwater River Subbasin in 1996. Progress has been made in restoring the sub-basin by excluding cattle from critical riparian areas through fencing, stabilizing streambanks, decommissioning roads, and upgrading culverts. Coordination of these projects is critical to the success of the restoration of the sub-basin. Coordination includes: within department coordination, sub-basin assessment and planning, and treaty area coordination.

Background

The Clearwater River sub-basin is massive in size, totaling 9,645 square miles, with a complex pattern of ownership and jurisdiction, and multiple understandings of how fisheries restoration should proceed. This watershed is located within the 1855 treaty territory of the Nez Perce Tribe, and it provides habitat for Spring Chinook, steelhead trout, and resident fish.

Management activities, by various landowners, have affected aquatic processes within this drainage. One of the key objectives of the Nez Perce Tribe and this position is to overcome fragmentation by managing communications within the sub-basin, providing an overall framework and process for coordinated fisheries restoration, and managing the planning, assessment, implementation and monitoring and evaluation process.

Objectives & Tasks

The objectives of this project address coordination activities associated with watershed restoration in the Clearwater River sub-basin and the 1855 Treaty territory.

Coordination objectives include:

1. Coordinate watershed project development within the 1855 treaty territory of the Nez Perce Tribe among federal, state, and local government agencies and private landowners in cooperation with the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission Focus Program.
 - a. Coordinate Clearwater River Subbasin watershed projects prioritization and planning between the US Forest Service, BLM, BIA, NMFS, NRCS, USFWS, ISCC, IDL, IDFG, IDEQ, conservation districts, private industry, and landowners.
 - b. Coordinate and provide administrative structure for Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee (PAC).
 - c. Provide direction for Washington State University, Center for Environmental Education in the development of the Clearwater Subbasin Watershed Assessment, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.
2. Manage development of Clearwater Subbasin Restoration Program, including the assessment, subbasin plan, and monitoring and evaluation plan.
 - a. Oversee contractor in the development of objective two. Provide leadership in the updating of the databases for the Clearwater Subbasin Assessment.
3. Manage implementation of assessment, enhancement/restoration, monitoring and evaluation of projects in areas that have been prioritized and planned.
 - a. Manage implementation and/or compilation of data for watershed assessments in Big Canyon and Lapwai Creeks.
 - b. Manage implementation, monitoring and evaluation projects to enhance or restore fisheries habitat in Lolo Creek, Bear to Fishing Creeks, North Lochsa Face, Mill Creek, Newsome Creek, and Meadow Creek (McComas Meadows).
 - c. Manage implementation monitoring and evaluation of current fiscal year projects.
4. Pursue additional funding sources to cost-share in future project implementation.
 - a. Facilitate interagency project funding participation.
 - b. Research private funding opportunities.

Results

Coordination

Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee

The Clearwater Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meets on a monthly basis. The co-coordinators of the Clearwater Focus Program organize these meetings. The main topic of concern for this group during this contract year was following and giving input on the Clearwater River Subbasin Assessment and Plan. These meetings were attended monthly. The draft sections were reviewed, and the PAC submitted comments to the sub-contractor for incorporation into the document.

Treaty Territory Coordination/Watershed Projects

The Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council (NPCC) holds monthly meetings regarding issues within the Columbia River Basin. The Focus Coordinator attended several meetings throughout the year regarding issues and concerns related to subbasin planning and watershed projects. Issues of concern include: progress and updates on subbasin plans, BPA funding on federal lands, tribal relationships, monitoring & evaluation, and project selection processes.

Project coordination and development has been initiated in the Oregon territory of the NPT treaty territory. Ira Jones and Jack Yearout were appointed to the Natural Resource Advisory Council (NRAC) in Wallowa County and to the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, as representatives of the NPT. Meetings were attended on a regular basis, as a way to seek out watershed restoration projects, as well as representing the NPT.

Coordination and project planning within the Clearwater River subbasin is an on-going effort. Several meetings were held to discuss planning documents initiated by cooperating agencies. Ongoing negotiation over the North Lochsa Face project was addressed, and no agreement has been reached to date. Other planning efforts that coincide with our treaty territory include Meadow Face Stewardship project, Middle Black Analysis Area, Clean Slate Project, Upper Bear, and Red River projects. Meetings were held with the Forest Service to discuss each of these project areas. Tribal and watershed concerns were expressed. Updates were given to the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) at various Natural Resource Subcommittee meetings throughout the year.

Several field tours were scheduled throughout the year to update cooperative agencies and coordinators on project statuses. In July NPT staff toured potential project areas in Wallowa County, Oregon. Two site tours were held in August 2002. In coordination with Janet Hohle, NPCC members and staff toured past

and on-going projects within the Clearwater River Subbasin. Region 1 Forest Service staff toured project areas within the South Fork Clearwater River drainage.

Many meetings were held regarding project issues, including project planning Tribal issues. Noteworthy meetings included a teleconference with Mark Shaw, BPA, on July 27 regarding the issue of cost sharing and project on federal lands. A 5-Forest (Nez Perce, Clearwater, Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Payette) meeting was held in Lapwai September 12. Discussions consisted of Treaty Right responsibilities and coordinating project activities on their perspective forests. In May, a public meeting was attended regarding issues concerning the Forest Health Initiative and forest management.

Subbasin Planning

Subbasin assessment and planning is occurring throughout the Nez Perce Tribe's treaty territory, which is encompassed within the Columbia River Subbasin. The Nez Perce Tribe is the lead for four sub-basin assessments and plans, including Clearwater River, Lower Salmon River, Imnaha River, and Snake Hells Canyon subbasin. The Nez Perce Tribe is also the co-lead on three subbasin plans including, Asotin Creek, Tucannon River, and Lower Snake Subbasin.

Development of Clearwater Subbasin Assessment & Plan

Public meetings were held on June 5 & 6, 2002 in Lewiston and Kamiah, Idaho to gather public input and comment on the Clearwater Subbasin Plan. In addition, three presentations were given to the Idaho Dept of Fish & Game sportsmen breakfasts in Lewiston, Orofino, and Grangeville, Idaho to discuss the plan.

Level II meetings were attended in Boise in June, July, and January regarding subbasin planning. Discussion focused on budgets, lead entity sponsors, and coordination.

The Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council (NPCC) holds monthly meetings regarding issues within the Columbia River Basin. The Focus Coordinator attended several meetings throughout the year regarding subbasin planning. Meetings regarding subbasin planning issues were attended in September, October, November, December, and January. Issues discussed at these meeting include subbasin planning master contract language, scheduling, and workplans. In November, the Clearwater River Subbasin Plan was presented to the Council, and approval was given to move forward in the review process for adoption into the NPCC Program.

A meeting was held on October 30 & 31, 2002 where the Subbasin Plan was presented to Idaho NPCC members, Judi Danielson and Jim Kempton.

A workshop presentation of the Clearwater Subbasin Plan was conducted with the ISRP, NPCC, USFWS & NOAA on November 19-21, 2002. The plan was also presented to Idaho Senators Mike Crapo and Larry Craig in Lewiston, Idaho.

Implementation of assessment, restoration, monitoring & evaluation

Various meetings were held between tribal staff and their partners for planning and coordination of watershed restoration activities.

On June 14, 2002, a meeting between the NPT and the Idaho Transportation Dept was held to discuss issues with a proposed project in the Lapwai Creek drainage.

A Participating agreement between the NPT and the Clearwater National Forest (CNF) was approved. This agreement detailed partner responsibilities for Upper Lochsa projects involving road obliteration and culvert replacements.

A mid field season update meeting for projects in the South Fork Clearwater River drainage between the NPT and the Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF) was held on August 13, 2002.

The Watershed Division held three staff meetings on August 19, 2002, March 24, 2003, and May 1, 2003. Each project leader gave updates, and current issues were discussed.

A meeting was held between the NPT and the NPNF to review the Newsome Creek environmental assessment.

A teleconference was held between NPT and BPA regarding issues with the NPT Monitoring and Evaluation project on October 8, 2002.

The NPT and the CNF held a meeting on November 15, 2002 to discuss funding and prioritization of road decommissioning.

A coordination meeting between all NPT departments was attended on March 17, 2003.

A field tour and project update took place April 7-9, 2003. Attendees included NPT Watershed project staff and CRITFC staff. Tour locations included McComas Meadows/Meadow Creek, Upper Lochsa River, and Lolo Creek.

A meeting was held May 3, 2003 between the NPT and the NPNF to discuss issues with the Meadow Face Stewardship project, which is located within the Meadow Creek drainage.

CRITFC staff visited the Upper Lochsa drainage on May 7, 2003. During the visit, a story was developed on restoration efforts within the Upper Lochsa drainage.

Pursue Additional Funding Sources

On June 24, 2002 a phone conference with NOAA Fisheries was held to discuss the use of BPA funds as a cost-share with NOAA's Community Based Restoration Program for the Lapwai Creek Watershed Project (Contract # 4497).

During July, the NPT worked to secure NOAA Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery funding through the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission as a cost-share for the Little Salmon River Project BPA.

Meetings were held with the NPNF and the coordinator for the North American Wetland Conservation Act to discuss options for a proposal for riparian and wetland conservation in the South Fork Clearwater River. A site tour of the South Fork Clearwater River drainage was held on July 9, 2002.

A proposal for funding of restoration projects in the Little Salmon River, through the USFS RAC process was submitted and presented in Cascade, Idaho on July 25, 2002. Funding was not approved in this review cycle.

In August, a proposal to the National Forest Foundation to secure matching funds for Upper Lochsa restoration work was reviewed and approved. It was submitted and approved by the Nez Perce Tribe Executive Committee.

Reviewed and discussed letter with Columbia River Inter Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) on the Pacific Salmon Recovery for Lapwai Creek on October 7, 2002 via teleconference Lapwai, Idaho/Portland, Oregon.

A workshop coordinated by Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) was attended in Portland, Oregon on February 27, 2003. The workshop was entitled "Tribal Partnership Opportunities with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers". Issues discussed included partnering opportunities and the needs of tribal programs. Nez Perce Tribal Fisheries Watershed Division and their needs were presented at this meeting.

A series of meetings, from March 10 – 14, 2003, between the NPT and the USDA Forest Service, Region 1 met to discuss opportunities through the stewardship and outsourcing processes.

On March 26, a meeting was held with the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss possible project funding opportunities.